

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 PRS-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:HABROTHERTON:HAB

APPROVED BY PA/M:WJDYESS

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O 232025Z SEP 76 ZFF4

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UNCLAS STATE 236540 TOSEC 270646

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT R. W. APPLE, JR. FRONT PAGE BY-LINER
THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, HEADED "DEBATE
ON TONIGHT; FORD-CARTER BATTLE NOW SEEN AS CLOSE --
DEMOCRAT SLIPPING IN POLLS -- BOTH SIDES STRESS IMPORTANCE
OF TV ENCOUNTER IN PHILADELPHIA AS CAMPAIGN ENTERS SECOND
PHASE."

2. WASHINGTON, SEPT. 22-WHEN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN
BEGAN IN EARNEST TWO WEEKS AGO, JIMMY CARTER WAS CONSID-
ERED BY MOST POLITICIANS A PROHIBITIVE FAVORITE TO DEFEAT
PRESIDENT FORD. THIS WEEK, WITH ROUGHLY A QUARTER OF THE
CAMPAIGN GONE, EXPERTS IN BOTH PARTIES WERE CALLING THE
RACE A VIRTUAL TOSS-UP.

3. TOMORROW, THE SECOND PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE
TWO NOMINEES, WHO WERE MINOR FIGURES ON THE POLITICAL STAGE
ONLY FOUR YEARS AGO, OPENS WITH THE FIRST OF THREE
PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES. MR. CARTER AND MR. FORD WILL APPEAR
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FOR 90 MINUTES, STARTING AT 9:30 P.M., BEFORE A LIVE AUDI-

ENCE AND NETWORK TELEVISION CAMERAS AT THE 167-YEAR-OLD WALNUT STREET THEATER IN PHILADELPHIA IN WHAT BOTH SIDES CONSIDER A CRITICAL CONFRONTATION.

4. IN PHILADELPHIA YESTERDAY, A COIN TOSS DETERMINED THAT THE DEBATE WOULD START WITH A QUESTION DIRECTED TO MR. CARTER AND END WITH A SUMMING-UP BY MR. FORD.

5. ALTHOUGH MOST NATIONAL POLLS, INCLUDING ONE TAKEN BY THE NEW YORK TIMES AND CBS NEWS, HAVE SHOWN MR. CARTER WITH A LEAD OF 10 TO 12 POINTS, THEY ALL PRECEDED THE LABOR DAY CAMPAIGN OPENING. STATE POLLS TAKEN SINCE THEN, BOTH BY THE CANDIDATES AND BY NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, SHOW A MARKEDLY DIFFERENT PICTURE.

6. IN THE PIVOTAL STATE OF ILLINOIS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE'S SURVEY GAVE MR. FORD A THREE-POINT LEAD, 44 PERCENT TO 41. ILLINOIS HAS GONE WITH THE VICTOR IN EVERY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SINCE 1920.

7. PRIVATE POLLS BY THE TWO CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS SHOW THE CONTEST TO BE EXTREMELY CLOSE IN CALIFORNIA AND NEW YORK, THE NATION'S TWO LARGEST STATES. AND A SURVEY IN NEW JERSEY BY THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY INDICATED THAT, WHEN ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS WERE CONSIDERED, MR. CARTER AND MR. FORD WERE RUNNING DEAD EVEN.

8. ONE DEMOCRATIC TACTICIAN, WITH ACCESS TO A WIDE VARIETY OF POLLING DATA AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE, GIVES MR. CARTER A LEAD--IN SOME INSTANCES, A TENUOUS LEAD--IN STATES WITH 249 ELECTORAL VOTES. HE GIVES MR. FORD THE LEAD IN STATES WITH 122 AND CONSIDERS TOSS-UPS STATES WITH 167 VOTES. IT TAKES 270 VOTES IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE FOR A BARE MAJORITY.

9. "I THINK WE HAVE THE MOMENTUM NOW," SAID ROBERT TEETER, MR. FORD'S OPINION ANALYST.

10. THERE WAS NO GREAT DISAGREEMENT AMONG LEADING UNCLASSIFIED

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DEMOCRATS, INCLUDING SOME WITHIN THE CARTER HIERARCHY. ONE OF THE LATTER, WHO HAD BEEN EXTREMELY BULLISH AS THE GEORGIAN SET OUT ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL ON LABOR DAY, SAID HIS CANDIDATE COULD NOT AFFORD "A MISTAKE A WEEK." ANOTHER HIGH PARTY OFFICIAL SAID MR. CARTER "HAS TO RE-GAIN THE MOMENTUM OR IT WON'T EVEN BE CLOSE."

11. IN THE VIEW OF MANY IN THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY,

MR. CARTER HURT HIMSELF BY A NUMBER OF UTTERANCES, INCLUDING SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS ABOUT CLARENCE M. KELLEY, DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF

INVESTIGATION; EARTHY COMMENTS ABOUT ADULTERY IN A PLAYBOY MAGAZINE INTERVIEW, AND IMPRECISE DISCUSSIONS OF TAX REFORM PLANS.

12. SUCH MISTAKES MAY, OF COURSE, PROVE TO BE OF NO LASTING DAMAGE; THAT WAS CERTAINLY THE CASE WITH MR. CARTER'S COMMENTS DURING THE PRIMARY CAMPAIGN ABOUT "ETHNIC PURITY." BUT AT BEST, THE DEMOCRAT'S MISSTEPS HAVE GIVEN AN ADDED IMPORTANCE TO HIS PERFORMANCE IN THE DEBATES, PARTICULARLY THE FIRST DEBATE AND MOST PARTICULARLY THE FIRST HALF-HOUR OF THE FIRST DEBATE.

13. THE DEBATE WILL TAKE PLACE AGAINST A BACKDROP NOT ONLY OF A DISAPPOINTING FORTNIGHT OF CAMPAIGNING FOR MR. CARTER BUT ALSO, AS VARIOUS POLLS HAVE INDICATED, OF CONTINUING DOUBTS IN SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE ELECTORATE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S COMPETENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

14. FOR THAT REASON, MR. FORD IS EXPECTED TO ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE HIS COMMAND OF THE MINUTIAE OF GOVERNMENT, THE FRUIT OF A QUARTER-CENTURY IN WASHINGTON, AND TO CONTRAST IT WITH MR. CARTER'S MORE LIMITED EXPERIENCE AS A STATE SENATOR AND A ONE-TERM GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA.

15. "HIS STRENGTH IS IN DETAIL," COMMENTED MICHAEL RAOULDUVAL, THE PRESIDENT'S COORDINATOR FOR THE DEBATES.

16. FOR MR. CARTER, THE OVERRIDING STRATEGY IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE NOT ONLY HAS THE CAPACITY TO HANDLE

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THE PRESIDENCY, BUT ALSO TO PROJECT A VISION OF THE NATION--SOMETHING THE GEORGIAN THINKS THE PRESIDENT INCAPABLE OF DOING.

17. BOTH WILL DISCUSS A NUMBER OF DOMESTIC AND ECONOMIC ISSUES DURING THE 90-MINUTE DEBATE IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS OF A PANEL OF REPORTERS AND IN DIRECT EXCHANGES. BUT FEW POLITICIANS EXPECT THE OUTCOME TO TURN ON ISSUES; RATHER, IN THE WORDS OF JOHN P. SEARS, WHO MANAGED RONALD REAGAN'S PRESIDENTIAL BID, THE POLITICIANS THINK OF THE DEBATES AS "PERSONALITY VEHICLES" THAT WILL TURN ON OVERALL IMPRESSIONS.

18. CLEARLY, MR. CARTER AND MR. FORD REMAIN QUESTIONABLE QUANTITIES TO MANY VOTERS. ALL THE POLLS SHOW A LARGE

NUMBER OF UNDECIDED VOTERS AND EVEN LARGER NUMBER OF VOTERS WHO INTEND TO VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE OR THE OTHER BUT ARE NOT SURE.

19. "THE DEBATES," SAID MR. TEETER, "WILL BE EITHER A OR THE MAJOR VEHICLE BY WHICH PEOPLE FIRM UP THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE TWO CANDIDATES."

20. NEITHER SIDE PROFESSES TO HOPE FOR A SUDDEN, DRAMATIC SWITCH IN VOTER SENTIMENT AS A RESULT OF THE DEBATE. PATRICK CADDELL, MR. CARTER'S POLLSTER, COMMENTED THAT MOST CARTER PARTISANS WILL THINK MR. CARTER "WON" AND MOST FORD PARTISANS WILL THINK THE PRESIDENT "WON." MR. RAOUL-DUVAL SAID THAT HE DOES NOT "EXPECT IT TO BE A WIN-LOSE SITUATION, NOR DO I EXPECT IT TO BE DEVASTATING TO MR. CARTER."

21. THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES, THOSE IN 1960, PRODUCED ONLY A SMALL SWITCH IN OPINION--A GAIN OF THREE PERCENTAGE POINTS FOR JOHN F. KENNEDY AND OF ONE FOR RICHARD M. NIXON, ALL COMING FROM THE UNDECIDED COLUMN.

22. UNTIL NOW, THE CAMPAIGN HAS SEEMED TO BE MARKING TIME, WAITING FOR THE DEBATE TO TAKE PLACE. BOTH SIDES GOT OFF TO UNUSUALLY SLOW ORGANIZATIONAL STARTS, IN PART BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME CONSTRAINTS ON SPENDING IMPOSED UNCLASSIFIED

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BY FEDERAL FINANCING. THE SCARCITY OF MONEY HAS NECESSITATED NEW ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNIQUES, AND THEY HAVE LED TO FRICTIONS WITHIN THE PARTIES.

23. IN ADDITION, THE CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN HAMPERED, IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO AROUSE THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE ELECTORATE, BY THE EVIDENT RELUCTANCE OF THE VOTERS TO TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE236540
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HABROTHERTON:HAB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760360-0023
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760926/aaaaawal.tel
Line Count: 209
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 FEB 2004 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <11 JAN 2005 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, PINT, US, NEW YORK TIMES, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (APPLE, R W JR)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006